

A Wall for Everyone by Moufida Fedhila

By Silvia Ferri de Lazara

The Tunisian artist Moufida Fedhila came to Padua from France to get a better insight of the situation of Via Anelli and understand the reasons behind the construction of the wall. Her work focuses on the meaning of boundary. The wall is the border that distinguishes the invisible from the visible and transforms space in a landscape that transforms a place into a camp.

Segregation is an extreme form of discrimination: when – spatial, social and symbolic – isolation of a minority group superimposes inequality of rights, opportunities and treatment or the internment of a certain category of people in spaces avoided by ordinary law, we are facing a process that tends to deprive individuals of their status. In Italy, there are places - or non places – through which takes place in an extreme process of real and symbolic expulsion from the Italian territory, from society, from the *civitas* of people deemed and labelled as undesirable: this is the case of the camps or rather, the institutions that are governed by the logic of the camps. As Giorgio Agamben says, the camp has thus become the extreme paradigm of our modern world.

Moufida often feels anguished by space, by their definiteness, by that sense of control that is often implicit in them. By the paradox of the coexistence of mobility and isolation in a same place. Mobility and isolation are two faces of contemporary inhabitancy: Mobility can mean dynamism, communication and ubiquity but also expropriation, uprooting, forced migration. Isolation implies privatisation, intimacy and shelter but also defence of property, aggression and ghettoisation. Those seeking a physical or imaginary place find that the idea of belonging is continually expropriated from forms of instability, whether those related to consumerism that induces continuously different needs or those political-economic forms that oblige an entire group to move to live.

Contemporary art, that art that is not a representation of reality but the problematisation of reality provides the most lucid reflection on the significance of space. Conscious of a progressive isolation of architecture in a territory that is both too autonomous and too influenced by communication, Moufida is trying to rediscover space in a non-instrumental way, seeking what Michel de Certeau calls “the need to articulate a second, poetic geography that goes beyond the geography of the literal sense.”

Moufida is searching for an alternative space that gives her a sense of warmth and of feeling at home. If inhabitancy is an essential feature of the human condition, her search becomes a journey towards the discovery of being. Her installation plays with boundaries. Between the gallery and private space, between the gallery and the city. In fact, the course of the exhibition is give way to different places that we cross. A wall, a video, some photos hanging on the walls speak of the boundaries that each and one of us build around himself.

Translation: Elizabeth Grech